

House Republican Press Release

July 19, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Summer Wrapup



*By State Rep. Toni Boucher, R-143, Wilton,
Norwalk*

Thank you for the privilege of representing you in the state legislature. It is a pleasure to hear from so many Wilton and Norwalk residents and to speak on your behalf in Hartford.

This year, controversial debates dealt with the death penalty (which was unchanged), stem cell research (passed), civil unions (passed), medical malpractice reform (passed with some changes but not satisfactory for doctors groups), legalization of medical marijuana (defeated through my efforts), and the recent Supreme Court Case on taking homes by eminent domain that has citizens in an uproar.

Eminent domain. Many colleagues and I have immediately co-sponsored a bill to protect individual homeowners from municipalities taking their property for private development. I am pushing for a special session to address this issue.

Fiscal restraint. We spent time combating excessive spending, higher taxes and overregulation of our schools, towns and daily lives. I opposed a \$31-billion, two-year budget that raised spending 9 percent the first year and 12 percent overall and reimposed the state death tax.

Transportation. In the most importation action for Fairfield County, I cosponsored the governor's \$1.3-billion transportation package to replace the aging 342-car Metro-North commuter rail cars, purchase more buses and eliminate numerous I-95 bottlenecks. New equipment for a modern, reliable rail alternative to clogged highways should be delivered starting in 2008. I am working on several proposals to dramatically improve the Norwalk to Danbury rail line that could become a major asset to our area.

Cell phone ban. On recommendations by law enforcement officials and many members of the public, the state House and Senate agreed on banning the dangerous use of hand-held phones while driving, effective October 1.

Reviving Connecticut job growth. Of concern to many lawmakers is our state's lagging behind the rest of the nation in job creation, income growth and economic development.

People in Connecticut work until May 3, the latest in the nation, just to pay combined federal, state and local taxes. Many 18 to 34-year-olds are leaving the state for better opportunities elsewhere. To help reverse this trend, I voted to hold down taxes and spending to help Connecticut regain its leadership in innovation, technology and economic growth.

Opposing new death tax. I opposed reinstituting the estate tax that will drive away philanthropists, business owners and family farmers. I voted to end an increase in the home sales tax that was promised to expire a year ago. It hurts seniors and other sellers.

Corporate tax surcharge. I argued against a 20% corporate income tax surcharge for 2006 and 15% for 2007 income year.

Stem cell research. The legislature committed \$10 million a year from surplus funds for stem cell research that may lead to breakthrough in combating illness. We also banned human cloning.

Civil union. The legislature allowed the legal protection of civil unions to same sex couples, while limiting marriage to a man and woman.

Nutrition. Many legislators voted to tell local schools what kinds of food and drink to sell to students. Other legislators and I believe nutrition is best left to parents and locally elected school leaders. Fortunately, the Governor vetoed this bill.

Campaign finance. One issue unresolved between the House and Senate is how to root out special interest money in political campaigns. Strict financial limit and complete disclosure, in my view and in the governor's opinion, are a better approach than using taxpayer dollars to fund more political campaign spending.

Thank you for your attention, and I wish you and your families a healthy and enjoyable summer season.

If you have opinions on state issues, or if I can help resolve a state problem, please contact me at 1-800-842-1423 or toni.boucher@cga.ct.gov

Toni Boucher serves the 143rd Assembly District of Wilton and Norwalk in the state House of Representatives.